

REMARKS

The Office Action of July 28, 2006 was received and reviewed. The Examiner is thanked for considering this application. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the currently pending rejections are requested for the reasons advanced in detail below.

Claims 1-40 were pending prior to this Amendment. Claims 5-8, 13-18 and 24-28 have been withdrawn from consideration. By the above actions, claims 2 and 32 have been canceled, and claims 1, 3, 4, 9-12, 19-23, 29-31, 3-36 and 38-40 have been amended. Accordingly, claims 1, 3-4, 9-12, 19-23, 29-31 and 33-40 are pending for consideration, of which claims 1, 9 and 19 are independent. In view of these actions and the following remarks, reconsideration of this application is now requested.

In the detailed Office Action, claims 1-4, 9-12 and 29-31 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Muehlberger (U.S. Patent No. 5,679,167 – hereafter Muehlberger). Further, claims 19-23 and 32-40 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Muehlberger in view of McMillan (U.S. Patent No. 6,203,619 – hereafter McMillan).

Initially, claims 2 and 32 have been canceled. Accordingly, the rejection of these claims has been rendered as moot.

In response to the anticipatory rejection of independent claims 1 and 9, Applicant has amended claims 1 and 9, as shown above. As recited in amended claims 1 and 9, a first part of an object is processed by a first plasma treatment under atmospheric pressure or approximate to atmospheric pressure in a first one of two chambers, and a second part of the object is processed by a second plasma treatment under atmospheric pressure or approximate to atmospheric pressure in a second one of the two chambers simultaneously with the first plasma treatment. Applicant respectfully asserts that the amended features are not taught, disclosed or suggested by Muehlberger. Consequently, since each and every feature of the present claims is not taught (and is not inherent) in the teachings of Muehlberger, as is required by MPEP Chapter 2131 in order to establish anticipation, the rejection of claims 1-4, 9-12 and 29-31, under 35 U.S.C. §102(b), as anticipated by Muehlberger is improper.

With respect to the obviousness rejection of claims 19-23 and 32-40, Applicant respectfully notes that Muehlberger does not teach, disclose or suggest an ink-jet device. Moreover, McMillan also does not teach, disclose or suggest the utility of an ink-jet device.

The present invention recited in amended independent claim 19 is distinguished over t Muehlberger and t McMillan at least by the utility of an ink-jet device.

Further, the application of the droplet to the object by the ink-jet device can be performed under atmospheric pressure, and further the plasma treatment is performed under atmospheric pressure or near atmospheric pressure in the present invention, as recited in amended independent claim 19. Therefore, in the presently claimed invention, time for vacuuming and atmosphere relieving, which is necessary for a pressure reducing apparatus, can be saved, and a complicated vacuum apparatus can be dispensed with to reduce the manufacturing cost. For at least these reasons, the present invention as claimed in amended independent claim 19 is not obvious over Muehlberger and McMillan.

The requirements for establishing a *prima facie* case of obviousness, as detailed in MPEP § 2143 - 2143.03 (pages 2100-122 - 2100-136), are: first, there must be some suggestion or motivation, either in the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art, to modify the reference to combine the teachings; second, there must be a reasonable expectation of success; and, finally, the prior art reference (or references when combined) must teach or suggest all of the claim limitations. As Muehlberger and McMillan are deficient, as discussed above, the rejection based on Muehlberger and McMillan, combined or separately applied, is improper.

Dependent claims 3, 4, 10-12, 20-23, 29-31, 33-36 and 38-40 have been amended to reflect the amendment in their respective independent claims 1, 9 and 19. New claims 41-45 have been added to further complete the scope to which Applicant is entitled.

While the present application is now believed to be in condition for allowance, should the Examiner find some issue to remain unresolved, or should any new issues arise, which could be eliminated through discussions with Applicant's representative, then the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone in order that the further prosecution of this application can thereby be expedited.

Respectfully submitted,



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